

Message Text

SECRET

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ACTION NODS-00

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /001 W

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Z 261326Z APR 76 ZFF-4

FM AMEMBASSY JIDDA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC FLASH 4523

S E C R E T JIDDA 3008

NODIS

FOR ASSISTANT SECRETARY ATHERTON

FROM AMBASSADOR

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MASS, PFOR, SA, JO, US

SUBJECT: PRINCE SAUD DISCUSSES JORDAN AIR

DEFENSE

REF (A) JIDDA 2919, (B) JIDDA 2961, (C) JIDDA2962, (D) JIDDA 3007

1. PRINCE SAUD ASKED ME TO CALL ON HIM TODAY (APRIL 26).

THERE WERE DOZEN AMBASSADORS WAITING TO SEE HIM, BUT I WAS
USHERED IN IMMEDIATELY TO DISCUSS, AS IT TURNED OUT, PROBLEM
OF JORDAN HAWK MISSILE SYSTEM.

2. SAUD HAD COPY OF SECRETARY'S MESSAGE TO FADH WHICH I
DELIVERED ON ARPIL 20(REFTEL A). HE SAID THAT FAHD HAD BEEN
WORKING AS HE ASSURED ME HE WOULD ON MATTER, AS THEY AWARE
WE HAD TIME PROBLEM. THREE DAYS AFTER OUR DISCUSSION, LETTER
FROM KING HUSSEIN ARRIVED STATING HIS UNDERSTANDING THAT QUESTION
OF U.S. HAWK MISSILE SYSTEM FOR JORDAN HAD BEEN "ABROGATED"
AND THAT ALL TECHNICIANS WHO HAD BEEN ENGAGED IN PREPARATORY
WORK IN JORDAN HAD CONSEQUENTLY BEEN WITHDRAWN. LETTER
CONTAINED STATEMENT THAT JORDANIANS WOULD TAKE SAUDI \$300
MILLION CONTRIBUTION AND USE IT WHEREVER POSSIBLE TO OBTAIN
MISSILE SYSTEM. THE TONE AND THRUST OF THE LETTER WAS
SUCH THAT SAG WAS TAKEN ABACK IN VIEW OF MY STATEMENTS TO
CROWN PRINCE ABOUT HUSSEIN'S EXPRESSION OF APPRECIATION TO
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SECRETARY FOR SAUDI ASSISTANCE AND DESIRE FOR US MISSILE

SYSTEM, HIS DISMAY AT RIFAI'S PRESS COMMENTS, AND JORDAN'S NEED FOR ADEQUATE AIR DEFENSE SYSTEM.

3. SAUD SAID JORDANIANS HAD INDICATED THAT US HAD NOT GIVEN THEM ANSWER TO THEIR PROBLEM WHEN THEY WERE IN UNITED STATES. I CLEARED UP TIME SEQUENCE FOR HIM INDICATING JORDANIANS AWARE WE WERE DISCUSSING MATTER WITH SAUDIS. HE NODDED AGREEMENT WHEN I MENTIONED HIM WE COULD NOT DISCUSS DETAIL WITH JORDANIANS BEFORE HEARING SAUDI VIEWS ON ALTERNATIVES WE HAD PRESENTED TO SAG IN MY LETTER OF MARCH 30.

4. SAUD SAID THIS MATTER HAD TO BE CLEARED UP AS IT HAD STOPPED ALL PROGRESS. I COMMENTED THAT I KNEW A LETTER WAS EN ROUTE BUT HAD NOT SEEN TEXT, NOR HAD MY GOVERNMENT AS FAR AS I AM AWARE. I WAITED, BUT HE DID NOT OFFER TO PROVIDE TEXT. IN ANY CASE, IT WAS NOT MY UNDERSTANDING THAT HUSSEIN'S LETTER WOULD FORECLOSE FURTHER ACTION ON SAUDI SUPPORT FOR US MISSILE SYSTEM FOR JORDAN. SAUD, WHO WAS NOT PRT NOT HIS USUAL AMIABLE SELF, DECLARED THAT THE LETTER POSES SERIOUS OBSTACLE TO FURTHER EFFORTS IN MATTER FROM SAUDI POINT OF VIEW AND THAT IT IS UP TO US TO GET AN EXPLANATION. I REPLIED THAT HE NEED FEEL NO DOUBT WE WOULD ENDEAVOR TO DO EXACTLY THAT, BUT I WOULD LIKE HIS ASSURANCES THAT HIS GOVERNMENT WOULD NOT CONSIDER MATTER TERMINATED UNTIL WE COULD CLEAR UP MISUNDERSTANDING. HE GAVE ME TO UNDERSTAND THAT THEY WOULD BE AWAITING OUR "COMMENTS AND EXPLANATION" IN VIEW OF WHAT JORDANIANS HAD DONE TO USG IN THIS MATTER.

5. SAUD BIN FAISAL REMARKED THAT JORDANIAN CROWN PRINCE IS

DUE HERE TOMORROW, "AND WE WILL SEE WHAT HE BRINGS ON SUBJECT." I SAID IT NOT CLEAR HE WOULD BE AUTHORIZED TO DISCUSS IT, BUT MINISTER SAID THEY WOULD SEE. I SAID IT IMPORTANT FOR ME TO SEE MINISTER WHEN I HAVE YOUR COMMENTS. HE INFORMED ME HE WILL BE HERE AGAIN ON WEDNESDAY AND WOULD RECEIVE ME ON THAT DAY. THIS PROBABLY MEANS ABOUT NOON WEDNESDAY, IF YOU CAN GET SOMETHING FOR ME BY THEN.

6. OF NOTE IN CONVERSATION WAS FACT THAT WHEN I WENT AGAIN OVER THE PROPOSITION I HAD MADE TO FAHD, I.E., 14 HAWKS AND SECRET

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100 VULCANS; AT SOMETHING OVER \$500 MILLION--FAR BELOW \$800 MILLION LEVEL HE HAD PREVIOUSLY DESCRIBED TO ME AS "HORRENDOUS"--HE DID NOT DEMUR, IN FACT HE SAID THEY APPRECIATED OUR EFFORTS.

7. I NEED TWO THINGS: YOUR COMMENT AND INSTRUCTIONS TO AMMAN AS WELL AS TO ME, PLUS AN INDICATION OF POSSIBILITY OF OBTAINING TIME BEYOND THE APRIL 30 DEADLINE IF THAT IS NECESSARY TO KEEP

THIS AFFAIR ALIVE. I HAVE GIVEN UP ON PRESS COMMENT FROM JORDAN (REFTELS C AND D) WHICH MAINTAINS HIGHLY PROVOCATIVE TONE APPARENTLY DESIGNED TO COUNTERACT OUR EFFORTS WITH JORDANIANS.

8. LET'S PLAY IT COOL AND CLINICALLY. IMPORTANT THING, AS I TOLD SAUD, IS TO KEEP OUR EYE ON MAIN OBJECTIVE WHICH IS TO EXCLUDE SOVIET PERSONNEL AND MATERIAL FROM JORDAN.

9. DEPT PLEASE DISTRIBUTE IN ITS DISCRETION.
PORTER

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NNN

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